



## Compliments & Complaints Policy

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R Righini	New Policy	1	10 October 2012
R Righini	Amendments for group.	2	25 <sup>th</sup> November 2013
R Righini	Government requirement re handling complaints from parents of SEN pupils	3	31 <sup>st</sup> August 2017
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<b>Document Owner &amp; Reviewer:</b>	<i>Eg. The senior manager responsible for this policy is the CEO</i>		
<b>Equality Impact</b>			
<b>Statement</b>	<p>We welcome feedback on this document and the way it operates. We are interested to know of any possible or actual adverse impact that may affect any groups in respect of any of the equalities act 2010 protected characteristics.</p> <p>The person responsible for equality impact assessment for this document is the Director of Equality and Diversity.</p>		
<b>Screening</b>	<p>This document has been screened by the Equality Team and the impact has been assessed as:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable  <input type="checkbox"/> Low  <input type="checkbox"/> Medium  <input type="checkbox"/> High</p>		

## **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to make everyone aware of how to pass on a compliment or make a complaint.

## **2. Scope of Policy**

This policy applies to anybody either inside or outside of the MAT. It sets out the route to be followed when making a compliment or complaint and details the different stages.

## **3. Reason for Review**

This policy was reviewed as part of a change in government requirements in June 2017.

## **4. Aim(s)**

We aim to handle compliments and complaints informally (usually resolved by the staff directly concerned) without the need to invoke a formal referral and process. It is our aim that most concerns will be resolved without the need to go any further.

## **5. Procedures and practice**

### **5.1. Compliments**

- 5.1.1. Compliments received will be properly recorded, acknowledged (where appropriate) and conveyed to the individuals being thanked and to all other interested parties.
- 5.1.2. Compliments and expressions of appreciation are valuable in monitoring our effectiveness.
- 5.1.3. Compliments can provide useful learning points and examples of good practice which can be shared throughout the organisation to promote our young people's self-esteem and encourage staff to continue to provide and improve on the excellent provision we offer.
- 5.1.4. An individual wishing to make a compliment can do so in any way they choose.
- 5.1.5. All compliments will be brought to the attention of the Head of Site and if applicable the people concerned will be advised of the details of the compliment.
- 5.1.6. Compliments and expressions of appreciation may be announced in whole organisation assemblies and celebrations held throughout the year. They may also be posted on our websites and within our newsletters.

### **5.2. Complaints**

- 5.2.1. We take all complaints seriously and we are sorry if anyone is not happy with us. We strive to put things right if we possibly can. We know that complaints

give us valuable feedback and help us to improve our services - we want to listen and learn.

- 5.2.2. A written record will be kept of all formal complaints, including whether they were resolved at Stage 2 or progressed to a Stage 3 panel hearing. We will also record what action was taken by the organisation as a result of those complaints (whether or not the complaints were upheld).
- 5.2.3. Complaints can be made verbally or in writing and all complaints received will be investigated and responded to.
- 5.2.4. The procedure below explains what to do if you feel unhappy about something and how to arrange to talk to someone or to go on to make a formal complaint. This procedure also applies to handling complaints from parents of children with special educational needs (SEN) about the support provided by their school.
- 5.2.5. Our school is not responsible for complaints about the behaviour of young people outside of our hours unless the young person is involved in extra-curricular activities provided by the organisation at that time.
- 5.2.6. If necessary, child protection, disciplinary or legal proceedings will take precedence over complaints procedures and timescales.
- 5.2.7. We would not normally progress complaints which refer to:
  - 5.2.7.1. a previously withdrawn complaint
  - 5.2.7.2. a repeat complaint that can be evidenced as having already been fully investigated by us
  - 5.2.7.3. complaints relating to matters subject to legal proceedings, grievance or disciplinary proceedings or child protection matters
  - 5.2.7.4. matters for which there is a statutory appeal process in place
  - 5.2.7.5. complaints relating to matters over 12 months old, that cannot be fairly or reasonably investigated because of the delay
  - 5.2.7.6. a complaint which is unclear, frivolous or vexatious. In these circumstances we will take action to protect staff and pupils from this behaviour.
- 5.2.8. All information relating to a complaint will be handled in a sensitive way ensuring that confidentiality is maintained except where the Secretary of State (or someone acting on his/her behalf) requests access to it. Any personal information obtained in relation to a complaint will only be used for that purpose. We will ensure that personal information is dealt with correctly and securely and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- 5.2.9. We will only respond to complaints and representations made by a representative or an advocate where they are eligible, or have permission to act on the pupil, parent or carer's behalf. Where an advocate is seeking to

progress a complaint, we will ensure appropriate written permission is obtained before progressing matters or releasing any information.

- 5.2.10. We understand that for some people making a complaint can be difficult and at times stressful. If you wish to receive support in making a complaint, please contact the Head of Site.

### **5.3. How to make a complaint**

- 5.3.1. We encourage any complainant to make every effort to resolve any concerns informally.
- 5.3.2. Please help us to resolve any concerns or complaints that you may have by following the stages below.
- 5.3.3. You can have a representative accompany you at any stage in the complaints process.

#### **5.3.4. Stage 1 - Raising your concern**

- 5.3.4.1. By talking things through, most issues, concerns or complaints can be resolved at this stage without the need to go any further.
- 5.3.4.2. The first thing you should do is contact the organisation either verbally or in writing. The admin team will put you through to the appropriate person or you can ask for a member of staff if you know who you want to speak to. If the person you speak to is unable to resolve the complaint then it may be necessary for him/her to consult a senior member of staff.
- 5.3.4.3. Should the matter not be resolved normally within 5 working days or in the event that we fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then you will be advised to proceed with your complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

#### **5.3.5. Stage 2 – Referral to Head of Site**

- 5.3.5.1. If the complaint cannot be resolved at Stage 1, then you should put your complaint in writing. This should be sent for the attention of the Head of Site.
- 5.3.5.2. Written complaints will be acknowledged on receipt and responded to normally within 10 working days. If the investigation is likely to take longer than 10 working days to complete, you will be notified of the extended timescale that will be needed.
- 5.3.5.3. We will normally meet with you, usually within 10 working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter further. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- 5.3.5.4. It may be necessary to carry out further investigation.
- 5.3.5.5. Once the Head of Site is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and you will be informed of this decision in writing.
- 5.3.5.6. If you are still not satisfied with the decision, you should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

### **5.3.6. Stage 3 – Referral to the CEO**

- 5.3.6.1. If you are still unhappy then you can refer your complaint in writing to the CEO.
- 5.3.6.2. Copies of all correspondence (where possible) should be sent with your complaint. The CEO will further investigate your complaint and will determine whether or not the complaint should be upheld, the reasons why, and what action (if any) will be taken.
- 5.3.6.3. The CEO may wish to meet with you to discuss your complaint and may invite other members of staff to the meeting.
- 5.3.6.4. The CEO will provide the complainant with a full written response, normally within 10 working days of acknowledging it. The response will provide details of how to move on to the next stage, if the complainant is still not satisfied.

### **5.3.7. Stage 4 – Referral to the Complaints Panel**

- 5.3.7.1. You can refer your complaint to the Governors Complaints Panel after Stage 3 of this procedure.
- 5.3.7.2. The complaints panel will consist of at least 3 people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and the panel will also include at least 1 member who is independent of the management and running of the MAT.
- 5.3.7.3. You will be asked to put your complaint in writing for the attention of the Governors Clerk.
- 5.3.7.4. A copy of your complaint will be sent to the Chair of Governors for their information.
- 5.3.7.5. The Governors Clerk, on behalf of the panel, will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as possible and normally within 15 working days.
- 5.3.7.6. You will receive written feedback from the panel following the investigation, including any decisions, recommendations and the reasons for them and, if appropriate, the next steps. This will be issued normally within 5 working days after the hearing.
- 5.3.7.7. If the complaints panel deems it necessary, it may require that further evidence of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such evidence will be supplied to all parties no later than 5 working days prior to the hearing.
- 5.3.7.8. You are allowed to attend the hearing and may be accompanied by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- 5.3.7.9. The remit of the complaints panel is to:
  - 5.3.7.9.1. dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
  - 5.3.7.9.2. uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
  - 5.3.7.9.3. decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;

- 5.3.7.9.4. recommend changes to organisation systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.
- 5.3.7.10. The decision of the panel will be final.

### 5.3.8. **Stage 5 - Complaining to the EFA and Ofsted**

- 5.3.8.1. If you feel that the governing body or the organisation has acted unreasonably about your concerns, you can write to the Education Funding Agency. Where possible you will need to put your complaint in writing and list the steps you have already taken and the responses you have received.
  - 5.3.8.2. Complaints about New Bridge MAT or one of its schools should be sent:
    - 5.3.8.2.1. Via the Department for Education's schools complaint form at <https://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/schoolperformance/school-complaints-form> or
    - 5.3.8.2.2. By post to - Department for Education, Castle View House, East Lane, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 2GJ
    - 5.3.8.2.3. Alternatively, you may wish to complain to OFSTED. You should contact the helpdesk, on 0300 1234 234 or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk). Staff on the help desk will discuss your concerns with you, advise you about whether to put your complaint in writing or suggest other ways to deal with your concerns.
    - 5.3.8.2.4. To make a formal complaint to OFSTED you will need to write to: Enquiries, National Business Unit, OFSTED , 5th, 6th and 7th Floors, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD. Further information can be found on the Ofsted website [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/complaints-ofsted-about-schools-guidance-for-parents](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/complaints-ofsted-about-schools-guidance-for-parents)
- 5.4. Sharing a concern about the Head of Site
- 5.4.1. Should you have a complaint about the Head of Site, you should first make an informal approach to the CEO, who is obliged to investigate it. This can be done via a phone conversation, email, in writing or requesting a meeting.
  - 5.4.2. The CEO will invite the Head of Site to respond to the complaint in writing within 10 working days.
  - 5.4.3. The CEO will send a copy of the Head of Site's response to the complainant and will be asked to indicate within five days of receipt of the response whether they are satisfied with the response. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response then Stage 4 should commence as described above.

## 6. Sources and references

The Key

## 7. Other useful documents

Child Protection Policy  
Data Protection Policy  
Whistleblowing Policy

**8. Monitoring**

This policy will be monitored through the MAT's accountability framework.

